

Craig Keener and M.D. Carroll R., eds., *Global Voices: Reading the Bible in the Majority World* (Peabody: Hendrickson), 2013. ISBN 978-1-61970-009-3.

The title of the volume holds such promise and the list of contributors deliver, in terms of authentic 'majority world' diversity, so very little. Or, to be more specific, the title would lead readers of this slim (118 page) tome to expect, before they picked it up, that contributors would abide in places other than North America or Europe.

'Global Voices' can be taken seriously here only if it is restricted to the idea that divergent ethnicities other than Caucasian are represented (and to be sure, they are) among contributors. And 'Reading the Bible in the Majority World' can only be taken seriously if, once more, divergent ethnic backgrounds are meant. For, in fact, each and every contributor to this volume lives in North America; or more exactly, in the United States of America or Canada.

J., A. Adewuya lives in Cleveland, TN; M. Daniel Carroll Rodas, in Littleton, CO; Daniel Darko in Wenham, MA; David deSilva in Ashland, OH; Nijay Gupta in Philadelphia, PA; Craig Keener in Wilmore, KY; Grant LeMarquand in Canada (it would seem); Barbara Lai in Toronto; Osvaldo Padilla, in Birmingham, AL; Chloe Sun in El Monte, CA; Edwin Yamauchi in Oxford, OH; and K. Yeo in Evanston, IL.

Whether or not their families emigrated from other places or they themselves did so is beside the point, it seems to me; for in fact all of us, except perhaps Native Americans, are immigrants and could argue that we too are foreigners here. Having an ancestor from an exotic 'majority world' country does not, necessarily, authorize one to describe oneself as 'a member of the majority world'.

So what we have here in fact are a collection of essays by North American residents speaking in the name of other lands and peoples. For instance, the title of David deSilva's contribution, "Neither Tamil nor Sinhalese: Reading Galatians With Sri Lankan Christians" (pp. 39ff) would give the impression at first blush that deSilva is reading the book of Galatians as a non- Westerner but that simply is not the case at all. Instead, deSilva situates himself as one of 'us' using 'we' and 'us' and describing the importance of social location in the act of exegesis and then going on to say that his contribution is a

... report on several conversations from around the table in Colombo Theological Seminary and around other tables in Colombo regarding how Galatians ... opened up avenues for the critical examination of the situation in Sri Lankan churches among those present (p. 41).

So, unless I have completely missed his point, daSilva is reporting how others read the text; his 'global voice' is the voice of someone else. So then, the question naturally arises, why didn't 'someone else' write the essay? Someone, for instance, who actually lives in Sri Lanka.

To be sure I find no fault in him. My disappointment is with the implications of the title itself and the failure of the volume to genuinely deliver on the promise its title makes. I was looking forward to hearing an Asian voice, from a resident of Asia, discuss an Asian perspective on some or other aspect of biblical interpretation. I was excited about the chance to hear an inhabitant of the Middle East read a biblical text through the lenses of the Middle East. Hopeful was I that a Latin American woman would explain to me her reading of the story of Sarah. My enthusiasm was, however, sadly dashed on the rocks like one of the babies of Israel's enemies as described by the angry poet who penned Ps 137.

If the book at hand were called something like 'Voices From The Majority World Through the Reports of North Americans' it would be more fitting. The great irony of the volume is that on page after page its authors discuss the value of social location for biblical interpretation; and meanwhile the 'majority world' is kept at arms length (in essence) because the social location of each contributor is the First World (or the minority world or whatever one wishes to call our little slice of this side of the globe).

And perhaps an even greater irony is the fact that the chapters of this collection came to life as papers delivered at the SBL Annual Meeting a few years back in San Francisco. If that gathering isn't 'first world' I'm really not sure what is given the fact that one must be fairly well off or be subsidized financially in order to attend and very, very few 'majority world' interpreters of Scripture are fortunate enough to be able to do so.

Yet none of the preceding criticisms should deter people from reading this collection. As ironic as that may sound, I have to say that the pieces here offered really do serve an important purpose- even if that purpose is to open our eyes to our own shortsightedness, bias, and proclivities towards parochialism. In doing only that, it does more than many weightier volumes which merely reinforce the status quo. They are Legion, and some day someone will cast them out into the hogs who then will rush into the sea and there drown, forever to be seen no more.

Get this book. Read this book. Think about the essays herein. Pass this book along to someone else.

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